

# **Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot**

## ***Oktibbeha County, MS***

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

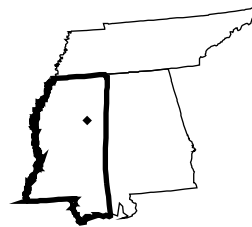
**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### **BACKGROUND**

EPA selected Oktibbeha County for a Brownfields Pilot. Oktibbeha County (population 38,522) is part of the Golden Triangle Region, a 3,543-square-mile, seven-county area in northeast Mississippi that was created in 1971 by the governor's executive order. The Golden Triangle (total population 172,416), and Oktibbeha County in particular, have been targeted by the state for redevelopment. The unemployment and poverty rates for these areas are 6.5 percent and 24.7 percent, respectively, and the area participates in the Appalachian Regional Commission's Distressed Communities Program. Most of the communities in the area are small—12 of the area's 20 incorporated municipalities have populations of fewer than 1,000 residents.

As part of a region-wide sustainable development initiative, the Oktibbeha County Economic Development Authority purchased approximately 220 acres of property from Mississippi State University for development of the Mississippi Research and Technology Park. During the third phase of the project, it was discovered that a 10-acre portion of the land needed to complete the project was formerly used as a landfill. This third phase calls for creation of a technology-based business incubator and a state-of-the-art science and technology "exploratorium."

### **PILOT SNAPSHOT**



*Oktibbeha County, Mississippi*

**Date of Award:**  
September 1998

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** The Pilot targets a 10-acre former landfill for assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment into the Center for Environmental, Biological, and Social Information Technology Enterprises.

#### **Contacts:**

Oktibbeha County Economic Development Authority (601) 324-7776	U.S. EPA – Region 4 (404) 562-8661
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Visit the EPA Region 4 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/region4/waste/bf/bf.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

The suspected presence of contaminants such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and hazardous laboratory waste has prevented completion of the project.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The county's primary objective is to assess, clean up, and redevelop the target area into the Center for Environmental, Biological, and Social Information Technology Enterprises (CEBSITE). When completed, CEBSITE will comprise a 50,000-square-foot technology-based business incubator, a youth-focused science and technology exploratorium, and regional recreational and day care facilities. The Pilot will assist in achieving this objective by conducting site assessments and facilitating interaction among stakeholders affected by redevelopment of the former landfill.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

*The Pilot has:*

- Conducted an assessment on the target site, and will collect and analyze a final set of groundwater samples in 2001;
- Created a joint university/public school task force to develop a full set of baseline measures and a youth-action community map of environmental resources in the Pilot area (The task force will include the participation of university and local high school students);
- Developed a community awareness program and convened a public forum on the Pilot project involving a broad base of community participants, and also co-hosted a "Keep America Beautiful" seminar and hosted a breakfast meeting of local community elected officials to discuss the Pilot project;
- Completed a web site that includes site assessment data, EPA reports, press releases, and information on getting involved with the project; and
- Conducted Internet outreach sessions for the community in September 2000.